

Housing for Special Needs Populations

Status: In Progress

Policy 6B.5

Efforts are ongoing on both the local and regional level to increase support and resources for those most in need of housing and supportive services.

Local Efforts:

- President Bush has issued a mandate that the 100 largest cities develop a 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. The federal Interagency Council for the Homeless is coordinating the development of these plans.
- The National Association of Counties, US Conference of Mayors and National League of Cities have passed resolutions in favor of developing plans to end chronic homelessness.
- Greensboro is required by HUD to annually describe our 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in our city's Continuum of Care federal grant application for funding to provide homeless services. Additional future federal funding opportunities for homeless services will be tied to the existence of a more formal City-endorsed plan to end chronic homelessness.
- Our local homeless population has continued to grow, with current estimates of over 800 homeless persons in our city. Approximately half of those are housed in City shelters and half are homeless not in shelters. Our most recent citywide count on December 15, 2003 reported the unsheltered to be 329 homeless single adults, 31 families (31 adults and 50 children) and 11 youth.
- The Greensboro Continuum of Care planning group is merging with High Point to create a countywide organization for the planning and implementation of homeless services.
- Greensboro will be assessing the needs of citizens most in need of housing and supportive services as we begin the planning process for a new *5 Year Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development*.

Regional Efforts:

Why develop a regional plan?

- Homelessness does not recognize the boundaries of our cities or counties. Our homeless population moves freely between cities and counties, from one shelter to another. The I-85/40 corridor is a major transit route for the homeless population.
- Some of our neighboring rural counties do not have homeless shelters. They often refer their homeless individuals or families to another county for shelter and services.
- Our agencies currently refer homeless clients to specific programs in other cities or counties when specialized services are needed or space is available elsewhere.
- We are already working towards regional partnerships. In response to HUD's requirement for computer based tracking of homeless persons and services, Greensboro and High Point jointly created the Piedmont Information Network (PIN) in October 2002 to administer a data-tracking network. This organization currently has member agencies from Greensboro, High Point, Burlington, and Winston-Salem.

Benefits from having a regional plan

- Strengthened relationships between our city's agencies with the other cities and counties will enable us to develop better strategies for working with similar homeless clients.
- The opportunity to learn about program ideas, community strategies and testimonies of what really "works."
- Encouraging development of homeless programs for surrounding counties which lack shelters and other supportive services. These counties currently refer their clients to our agencies.

What has been done?

- Representatives met with a regional foundation on Monday, January 5, 2004 to discuss the possibility of grant funding for organizing the Piedmont Council to End Homelessness.
- A meeting with regional representatives was held on Tuesday, January 6, 2004 to discuss the concept of a regional plan.
- Subsequent meetings on Jan 22, Feb 10 and Mar 11 sought to increase representation and define tasks. Participation has already increased to Alamance, Randolph, Forsyth, Davidson, Surry, Stokes, Yadkin and Iredell agency representatives.

Next Steps?

- Mayors of participating cities have written letters of support for the effort to establish the Piedmont Council to End Homelessness. These letters were included in a grant application to cover the costs of a consultant and grant writer to help with the process of coordinating and developing resources for service providers in the regional area.
- Additional grant applications will be submitted in the future to study regional homeless issues and develop a regional plan to end chronic homelessness.

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